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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9459
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 2191
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 0301
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1939
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 1337
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1767
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000103

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
INL FOR KEVIN BROWN AND MEAGAN MCBRIDE
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS
DEA HQS FOR OC/HARRIGAN, OEX/SHROYER, OGL/KOLEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HA](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#)
SUBJECT: HAITIAN AUTHORITIES ACCUSED OF MISAPPROPRIATING
DRUG MONEY

* Missing Section 001 *

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part in the theft offered USD 10,000 to a local magistrate at the scene, and had set aside USD 20,000 to share with the first Senator of the Northwest Department, Evaliere Beauplan.

In late December, Beauplan vigorously denied involvement, claiming he was abroad when the money was seized, and called the report an effort to smear him politically.

15. (C) Pursuant to an investigation into the stolen funds by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ronald Gelin, Administrator of the Port-de-Paix Tribunal, took a unilateral decision to close all court sessions indefinitely. Gelin wrote a letter on December 11 to Minister of Justice Jean Joseph Exume informing him of his decision, claiming that the involvement of so many local law enforcement officials in this egregious case of corruption made the continuation of operations of his court impossible. The Minister summarily fired Gelin for 'insubordination' after ignoring the Minister's demand that he re-open the court. On January 14, the Minister replaced Port-de-Paix Chief Prosecutor Michenet Balthazar and two of his deputies.

Uncle of Alain Desir Shot, Senior HNP Officer Dead

16. (C) Two instances of violence have occurred in connection to the case since the government's investigation began. According to the HNP, on December 27, four assailants shot Desir's uncle, Marc Frederic, in the stomach. The victim required emergency surgery but was released from the hospital January 26 and immediately transferred to prison in Port-de-Paix on orders of the prosecutor there. On January 11, Phillipe Jean Raymond, the second-highest ranking HNP police official in Port-de-Paix (along with six other suspects from the police and prosecutors office), was arrested and transported to Port-au-Prince for questioning at Judicial Police Office (DCPJ) of the HNP. Visibly ill and

complaining of severe stomach pain, he was taken to the hospital where he died later that night.

17. (C) Rumors began swirling in Port-au-Prince the week of January 12 that Raymond had been poisoned. Chief Prosecutor Joseph Manes Louis told the press January 14 that the autopsy of Raymond was complete, but he refused to reveal the result. He did say that a ''foreign substance'' had been discovered in the corpse, and that he had ordered a toxicological examination. In an attempt to dampen the controversy set off by the officer's death in police custody, Secretary of State for Public Security Eucher Luc Joseph called for calm and reiterated in a public statement January 13 that the police and judicial authorities ''must show prudence'' in their investigation of the sensitive drug-related case. DCPJ Director Franz Thermilus tried to dispel speculation by telling the press January 15 that as an HNP officer Raymond had been treated with all due consideration. A Cuban doctor had accompanied him on the trip from Port-de-Paix to the capital. The autopsy had revealed no signs of violence to the body. HNP Director General Mario Andresol told DEA country attache privately January 12 that it appeared Raymond died from (self-induced) poisoning by ingestion of battery acid. A senior MINUSTAH contact present at the autopsy confirmed to NAS Director January 13 that the victim died from a burst ulcer of the esophagus. The investigation into the cause of his death is continuing.

18. (C) The Minister of Justice put forward a request in mid-January, to facilitate a special investigative team to interview Alain Desir in U.S. custody; however, Desir's attorney adamantly denied the request, defending Desir's right under Haitian and U.S. law to remain silent. DEA is working to determine if a separate GOH investigative team could travel to Florida to meet with DEA investigators to determine if there is additional information to share. Not wanting to be left out of the act, Chamber of Deputies President Levaillant Louis-Jeune stated January 27 that the bicameral parliamentary commission investigating the scandal

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would also like to interview Desir in the U.S.

19. (C) Comment: The case, now referred to in the press as the ''Narco-dollar Scandal'' has generated intense public interest and rumor mongering. While DEA believes that the USD 1.7 million turned in by Port-de-Paix officials is only a portion of the cash they found, media claim that local officials stole as much as USD 32 million. The facts as we know suggest that hundreds of thousands--not millions of dollars were stolen. Rumors persist that Deputy Commissioner Raymond was poisoned. A Parliamentary commission is drafting an investigative report that it promises to release shortly. The scandal has dealt another blow to public confidence in law enforcement and the judicial system, with at least 18 suspects in detention thus far, including 11 HNP officers and seven judicial officials. This case shows Haitian law enforcement at its most corrupt. On the other hand, central HNP and Ministry of Justice authorities appear to be investigating the case seriously. The incident shows the challenges the USG faces in working with Haitian police and judicial officials in fighting drug crime, and in building up the capacity of those same institutions.
SANDERSON